

AXEMAN REPORT

SEPTEMBER
2006



FROM THE CDR

Dear Family & Friends of Alpha Company 1-121st FA BN,

Well, another month has come and gone and what a busy month we have had. How busy you might ask? Well let's just say that the Axemen of Alpha Company are leading the Battalion in terms of number of missions performed AND number of miles driven. Your soldiers are doing great things and performing their duties at the Highest Standard . . . and believe me, it is noticed at all levels.

This past month your soldiers were assigned the task of training an Active Duty unit, the 89th Transportation Company recently assigned to the 57th Transportation Battalion. Many of these soldiers are on their second deployment; however this time, instead of their Transportation Mission of driving the trucks carrying supplies and cargo, they've been assigned a similar mission to us in providing Escort Security Protection. All of our soldiers stepped up to provide excellent mentoring and training for this unit.

In addition to providing training on the TTPs (Tactics, Techniques, & Procedures) of conducting and executing the escort mission, our soldiers provided additional much needed instruction on Combat Medical Training, Communications training involving the Radio and Computer systems utilized in our HMMWVs, and Individual/Crew Served Weapons systems; not to mention the always important PMCS (Preventative Maintenance Checks and Services) on our weapons and equipment. The soldiers received high accolades from both the 57th Transportation and 1-121st FA Battalions for an outstanding job well done.

Our company also picked up the mission to provide escort to BITUMEN (pronounced "bit – too

– men") trucks. For those who do not know, BITUMEN is a product used in the process of constructing highway roads. This mission is vital to the successful completion on a new highway system to be used here in our AO (Area of Operations).



Downloading BITUMEN from the escorted trucks into holding tanks at an Asphalt Plant.



SFC Douglas Perez (left) and SGT Ronald Ruhlin (right) talk while waiting for BITUMEN to be download at an Asphalt Plant.

And, in addition to this, your soldiers continue to conduct their normal missions. Did I mention we are busy? ☺

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I don't think a week goes by that our soldiers do not come in contact with the soldiers of SECFOR I . . . somewhere. I've received verbal relayed messages (thanks **SSG Shawn Rogers**); hand written notes (thanks **SSG Lloyd Chaison**); emails (thanks **SSG Kirk Cyr**, **SGT Seth Milton**, and of course **CPT Darryl Lyon**). Almost every platoon from my company has met soldiers from SECFOR I, whether it's at their locations or at shared "pit stops" in the AO. I hope to capture photos of the meetings in the future.

And, for those who may have missed it, through a much coordinated effort, we pulled off a surprise for the Bailey family (see picture and link below). Thanks to the many people involved including: **Julie Mirlicourtois**, Associate Producer, CBS News, The Early Show; **Josh Vierela**, Media Relations Specialist - Northeastern Region DVIDS - Digital Video & Imagery Distribution System Supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom & Operation Enduring Freedom with Third US Army; **MAJ April Olsen**, Public Affairs Officer, CFLCC (FWD) – Arifjan; **1LT Randy Gehrke**, Civil Affairs / Public Affairs Officer, HHC 1-121 FA (SECFOR); and **SFC Barbara Claudel**, MENG Family Assistance Center Coordinator.

The "Flat Daddy" / "Flat Mommy" Phenomenon is truly a great success story definitely worthy of the National Attention it is receiving. We can't say enough great things to thank SFC Claudel and her team for the "above and beyond" support they provide to the soldiers and the families.
THANK YOU!!!!

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/09/21/earlys/how/main2028198.shtml?CMP=ILC-SearchStories>



The cardboard version of Craig Bailey sits with his wife, Jennifer, son Nate and daughter Abby on *The Early Show*. (CBS)
(Courtesy of CBS News at www.CBSNews.com)

Finally, we wish **MSG Jerry Holmes** GODSPEED in his return to CONUS (Continental United States) to deal with his current situation. Thanks to **MSG Dave Guerrette** for coordinating a send off dinner get-together / ceremony. Here's some photos of the event.



From l to r: 1SG Paul Eubank, MSG Jerry Holmes, CSM Robert Brown, CPT Kent Cousins, 1LT John Gates, SSG Jason Liss, SFC John Martin, SFC Scott Poulin, MSG James Tash

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For MSG Jerry Holmes. Courtesy of MSG Dave Guerrette and his team. Unfortunately, no, that potato wasn't imported from Cheney Family Farms.



MSG Dave Guerrette. Thanks for the hard work!!!

As always, to all our family and friends, we say thanks. Keep the letters and packages coming.

A very special thanks goes out to:
American Legion Auxiliary Newport Harbor Unit 291 from Nevada for the numerous packages sent to the company; **Rona Backstrom** and the folks from **MSEA SEIU Area II Retiree Chapter** for the awesome care package; and to **Busta, Shelagh, Jonathan, Amanda, & Ben** for the two

cases of *Up North – The Moosehead Magazine*. Not only are we sharing this wonderful magazine with all the soldiers in the company (Maine, Nevada, & Arizona), we're also sharing it with the other companies within the Wisconsin Battalion in hopes of drawing tourism interest to our Great State. Some of my fellow Company Commanders have already expressed an interest for a vacation in the Pine Tree State!!

Until we chat again.

v/r

CPT Kent A. Cousins

Commander

Company A, 1-121st FA BN (SECFOR)

"AXEMAN 6"



FROM THE "TOP"

Greetings to all our Family and Friends. Yes, things have been busy here during the past month. There is never an end to the administrative work to be accomplished. The admin section of **SSG Peter Lawrence, SSG Stanley Hampton, and SGT Ronald Batula** have been right out straight taking care of all the promotions, re-enlistments, extensions, awards, preparing the soldiers paperwork for R & R leave . . . and oh yes, the mail {See HQS Platoon Report}.

Thanks to all who have sent the numerous packages and letters. The soldiers sincerely appreciate all the support you are providing.

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PROMOTIONS

I'd like to share with everyone the recent promotions of these fine, young deserving soldiers to the rank as indicated:

SGT Gregory Sanchez, CPL Leonard Hanson, CPL Joseph Rodgers, SPC Manolo Lucido, PFC Glenn Cole.

CORRECTION!!!!

Last month, we inadvertently identified the wrong rank in a promotion. The correct rank for the following soldier is:

SGT Randolph Chupp

RE-ENLISTMENTS/EXTENSIONS

Here's another indicator of just how dedicated your soldiers are to the mission at hand and to the service to their state and country. The following soldiers have either Re-enlisted or Extended their enlistments. I'm going to go back and capture all of the soldiers from August as we neglected to mention some in our previous newsletter.

For the month of August:

Re-Enlistments: SGT Richard Aveau, CPL Ralph Bartman, CPL Michael Harrington, SGT Scott Sjoberg.

Extensions: CPL Joey Billings, SGT Andrew Bugbee, SPC Robert Calloway, SPC Daniel Cruz, SPC Jeremiah Cuevas, SGT Nathan Daisley, SSG Johnny Deal, SGT James Ditmars, SPC Sean Garvin, SPC Joseph Hall, SSG Justin Harris, SPC Bryan Hunt, SGT Robert Kendall, MSG Paul Kinsey, SSG Peter Lawrence, SGT Genaro Martinez, SFC Douglas Perez, SGT Brian Poplin, SPC John Randall, SPC Allen Rood, SGT Gregory Sanchez, SGT Carlos Velasquez, SGT Edelmart Villaespin, SGT Joseph Wireman

For the month of September:

Re-Enlistments: PFC Glenn Cole, SGT Scot Mackenzie

Extensions: CPL James Barnard, SGT Christopher McBean, CPL Roger Willett

Thanks again to all our Family and Friends for your continued support. Until next month.

1SG Paul M. Eubank

First Sergeant

Company A, 1-121st FA BN (SECFOR)

"AXEMAN 7"

HQS PLATOON

Good morning from the Axemen of Headquarters Platoon in Northern Kuwait!

Guess what? We only have nine months and three weeks left over here! It's incredible, but the time is going by so fast. Before we know it, it's going to be Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and finally New Year.

And next month, our two week Rest & Recuperation leaves begin. Between now and May, our Soldiers will start arriving home for two weeks leave (not counting travel time). There's already excitement and anticipation in the air about the upcoming leaves. Not everyone is going home, though. Some Soldiers are bringing their wives and families to meet them in the Bahamas and Europe. After all, if the government is paying for our travel, we only have to pay for family travel to enjoy a wonderful vacation seeing sights that normally we'd have to spend months (or years) saving for.

Other than that, life is still a daily routine of being up early, working, and leaving work late. Our

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convoys still go north and return the next day, or days later for long trips.

“MAIL CALL!!!”



A very busy SGT Ronald Batula handling one days worth of mail and packages. Thanks to all!!!

And the mail! Thank you to everyone for the mail that has been coming in. There are times when the Orderly Room is so full that you can barely find the door, let alone a place to work. The 1SG had a mail cabinet built, but we’ve been told even that won’t be large enough when the holiday season begins. But strangely enough, there are

packages arriving that contain a great many doggie toys and doggie treats. Not that we have a pet here because pets aren’t allowed and any dogs that wander in are taken away.

But, there was a Nevada NCO who received five packages from his wife one day. He was thrilled until he discovered two packages were for him and three were filled with doggie toys and treats. He made a few heartfelt comments about his wife. And then a Maine NCO, who we won’t name, received a box one day (this was after we suspected he was mailing boxes to himself so he could get mail). The box contained a t-shirt, a pair of underwear, and a very small blanket – everything else was doggie toys and treats. The NCO also made a few heartfelt comments about someone close to him, but then insisted he was keeping the blanket.



MSG James Tash . . . "Now where did I put ‘Krusty’s’ blanket?"

Until next month.

SSG Stanley Hampton

Admin NCO

Company A, 1-121st FA BN (SECFOR)

“AXEMAN HISTORIAN”

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1ST PLATOON

Hello families and friends of 1st Platoon.

For this installment of the monthly newsletter, 1st Platoon is going to use the **“picture’s worth a thousand words”** saying and show you some of the world we operate in and your soldiers in it.



It doesn't snow here . . . but sandstorms look similar to a snow squall.



Here is SGT Andrew Bugbee wondering . . . "Now where the heck did Lane (SPC Eric Lane) put that thing?"



Another sunrise on "Iraq's RT 1" . . . also known as MSR Tampa. The guys see many of these sunrises.



Your soldiers getting ready for a mission. PFC Glenn Cole poses for a picture from the Gunner's Turret.

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This is SGT Ronald Ruhlin doing a little International Diplomacy with our Italian Allies.



There is a little green here . . . We just have to go a little farther north.



Somebody made a wrong turn and I think we went to the moon . . . judging by this landscape.



How many times have these been in the way on the roads of Maine? Or . . . "Iraq's version of a Moose!!!"

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A home in Southern Iraq.



And for our "Picture Perfect" installment, here is SPC Kevin Tedesco (left) of Westbrook, and SPC Wade Light (right) of Lewiston. Looking good guys. Thumbs up for sure!!!

Until next month, stay safe and know we are thinking about you.

CW2 David Cheney
1st Platoon PLT LDR
Company A, 1-121st FA BN (SECFOR)
"AXEMAN 10"

2ND PLATOON

Hello again from 2nd Platoon. Things have been very busy for Alpha Company receiving full mission load from the redeploying unit. How busy you may ask . . . well, at the two month mark, the Battalion "miles driven on mission" are about to reach 1 Million! Alpha leads the Battalion with over all miles.

Things have become quite routine now as well. The soldiers have become savvy at their duties and look forward to being on the road. Being busy makes time seem to fly and that's a good thing. Time does not stop and how they spend it makes all the difference dealing with separation from loved ones, family and friends. You should be proud of



The Maine State flag flying high over the Company Command Post.

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your soldiers for they already have a reputation of “no nonsense, get the job done.”

Leave and Pass time is approaching quickly the men are excited.

With anticipation of time spent with you, we ask that you take care of one another.

Sincerely,

SFC Bruce Roscoe
2nd Platoon PSG
Company A, 1-121st FA BN (SECFOR)
“AXEMAN 25”



SSG Michael Hall prepares to go on mission serving as TC (Truck Commander).

3RD PLATOON

AXEMAN 30 BAGHDAD BLOG

ALLONS!!! It is that time for another update of our deployment out here in the desert. We’ve been in country for over two months and the men are still in high spirits towards accomplishing our mission. I wanted the families back home to hear from a couple of the hard charging warriors from 3rd platoon describing their experiences and challenges in regards to our venture thus far. We thank you for all the letters, care packages, etc. that we’ve been receiving and we thank you for your

continued support and prayers. Our families are the true heroes for being strong and courageous while we’re deployed; we are just working hard to contribute to the overall mission success and safely return home. ON THE WAY!!!

2LT Rommel M. Ferrer
3rd Platoon PLT LDR
Company A, 1-121st FA BN (SECFOR)
“AXEMAN 30”



2nd Squad: From l to r: SFC Steven Kovacs, SPC Philip Fred, SPC Samuel England, SPC Brian Green, SGT Robert Kendall (front), SPC Ronald Easton (middle), SPC Derek Ernst, MSG Paul Kinsey, SPC Joseph “DOC” Hall, SGT Nathan Daisley, SGT Michael Tilton, SPC Joseph Cole, SPC Russell Waite

2ND SQUAD

The living conditions here are not the greatest, nor are they the worst. We live in tent city with 8 soldiers per tent, most with bunk beds. However, some have brought another bed inside the tent to keep from sleeping on the top bunk. Some have made their own little private areas with blankets or sheets. On average, the areas we have are approximately 6’ X 4’ (not much room but we get by). We do have our computers, internet, dvd players, TVs, Xbox, fans, mini fridge, lamps, and

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folding chairs to make it our “home away from home” for the next year.

From **SFC Steven Kovacs**
(3rd PLT, 2nd SQD LDR)



SFC Steven Kovacs enjoying some free time.

3RD SQUAD

In the short space of two and a half months, 3rd Platoon has already seen most of Iraq, escorting convoys from Kuwait, as far north to Mosul, and as far west to Taqqadum and Fallujah. A welcome break from the seemingly endless miles of desert is the citizens of Iraq who gather to watch us pass; in particular, the Bedouins whose children would wear their traditional brightly colored garb. The troops have taken to safely tossing candies, stuffed animals and other goodies to the kids who happily scramble after them.

From **SGT Michael Coughran**
(3rd PLT, 3rd SQD)



SGT Michael Coughran and a setting sun in Iraq.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
1st Squadron, 221st Cavalry
6400 N. Range Road
Las Vegas, Nevada 89009



4TH PLATOON

September is now behind us here at Camp Navistar, and the spirit of the cavalry lives on in 4th Platoon, Alpha Company, 1-121 FA. Meanwhile, the 1-221 CAV, “NEVER BROKEN”, continues to drive forward the mechanisms that make our missions successful. Aside from a couple of Soldier issues that induced inconvenient pauses, the 4th platoon momentum is in the positive direction.

This month, 4th Platoon and the rest of the battalion, transcended a mile marker known as the patch ceremony. We are now wearing the combat patch of the 143rd Transportation Command, and yours truly, **1LT Garcia**, was selected as the Master of Ceremony and read the history and definition of this patch. In addition to our normal responsibilities, Alpha Company was tasked with right-seat-ride training for the 89th Transportation Company. Although they were far behind the curve when they came to us, the technical and tactical

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skill of our truck commanders managed to put them in a respectable position on the curve. The 89th will compose the convoy commanders for our future missions we will be providing escort to, so the training we provided them was extremely important.



During a recent trip to BIAP several 4th Platoon members (in addition to a couple other 221 Troopers) were escorted through the AL Faw Palace by Captain Ron Abate, USNR. Front row L to R: SSG Timothy Wadley, SSG Roger Decoster, MSG John Bersalona. Back row L to R: SFC Joel Chaffee, SGT Randolph Chupp, CPT Ron Abate, SFC Steven Kovacs (3rd PLT), SPC Bobby Aleman, MSG James Foreman (HHC). The skipper extended tremendous hospitality and professionalism by taking time out of his day to point out various facts about the palace during the reign of Saddam Hussein.

1LT Frederick Garcia
4th Platoon PLT LDR
Company A, 1-121st FA BN (SECFOR)
"AXEMAN 40" A.K.A. "GHOSTRIDER 40"

CLOSING SHOTS

Below are some photos taken during the past month that we'd like to share with everyone back home. Enjoy.



"Axemen Midnight Volleyball Game"



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"Sunset in Kuwait"



SPC Derek Freeman
Recipient of the Purple Heart



SPC Derek Freeman (left foreground) stands at attention in preparation to receive the Purple Heart from COL Don S. Cornett, 336th Transportation Command Group Commander.